



The D League has always been a shadowy figure to me. Not college basketball. Not the NBA. Sort of basketball purgatory, [a process of purification or temporary punishment](#) .

Starting in 2001 as the National Basketball Development League (NBDL) with 8 teams, each assigned as breeding grounds for multiple NBA teams, the league changed its name in 2005 to the NBA D-League and, more importantly, recently emerged with a new focus. The Cavs put their stamp of approval on this focus by purchasing the New Mexico Thunderbirds, [moving the team to Canton](#) and establishing them as Cleveland-dedicated one-step-away-from-the-Q pre-Cavaliers.

In the past, arguments about the lack of team chemistry rang hollow as players came and went in the time it takes for a Lolly Trolley tour. Chemistry, especially winning chemistry, takes time, patience, advanced basketball skills, close proximity and continuity. Employee turnover equals loss of production regardless of the industry.

With the NBA in lockout mode, the timing is perfect for the emergence of a 30-team legacy D-League, each team an extension of their parent NBA partner. Players who opt of our college can hop from high school to D-League to Pro, all the while having an income, a dream and a team. As [Michael Levin of Liberty Ballers](#), says:

Nothing gets a fan more excited than a young team with upside . . .

In fact, [last July Mr. Levin advocated a secondary D-League draft](#) that:

... helps the player because he starts to get paid while readying himself for the rigors of professional basketball. It benefits the team in that they get to install a system he can get comfortable in and understand before playing against more difficult competition the following year. Monetarily, it gives the front office a smaller business model with which they could try different marketing/promotional tactics as well as hype up the impending call-up of a high upside draft pick the following season. The fan base would love it because it would give them something to root for even if the team is God-awful (see: [76ers](#) , Philadelphia, 2009).

Cleveland's baby Cavs need a name. And Cleveland fans need some basketball games to watch. Enter "NBA D-League Canton," a Web site where a possibly great team with a particularly awful name meets fans aching for competition, spirit and hometown pride.

[Click here](#) to submit your team name ideas, purchase tickets (and possibly receive a free T-Shirt) and, if you're feeling brave, complete and submit the Tryouts form (or forward it to your local basketball hero).

You can follow our new D-League on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or the [NBA D-League's site](#) .